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THE NEW YORK

LATIN LEAFLET

Entered at the Post Office in Brooklyn as second-class matter, October 29, 1900
Under the Act of March 3, 1879

25 Issues

Every Penny of
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VOL IV

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, MAY 9, 1904

No 99

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Fourth Annual Meeting of the Latin Club

The twelfth regular meeting and the fourth annual meeting of The New York Latin Club is called for Saturday, May 7th, at 12 M, in the Hotel Albert, corner of University Place and Eleventh Street, New York. Professor Knapp, of Columbia University, will address the club on the subject of "Vergil". All persons who are interested whether teachers of Latin or not, are cordially invited to be present. The plan is to serve luncheon (50 cents a plate for everybody) at 12 M promptly, so that there shall be no delay. The address will follow the luncheon, and adjournment will occur about 2 P M *thus leaving the afternoon still unbroken for those who attend.* Please send a postal card at once to the Sec'y, Mr A L Hodges, 309 W 101st, N Y, if you intend to be present, so that we may inform Mr Frenkel the proprietor of the hotel, how many to expect. *Please attend to this at once.*

The election of officers for the coming year will be held at this meeting.

H H BICE, *President*
A L HODGES, *Secretary*

MISCELLANEA SUPERSTITIOSA II

Among the most potent powers of the superstitious apparatus the superstition attached to the so-called "Sympathy" is perhaps the most widely used. Sympathy, for the ancient wizard, is every likeness, however remote or fanciful, between two objects, or two processes of nature. Often the similarity is so far-fetched as to escape us altogether, or, at least, to participate of the nature of a pun.

An example in point is found M.E.XX 85: ossifragi venter madefactus adpositusque his ad stomachum, qui cibum non conficiunt, utilissimus est vel etiam si tantum manu tenetur plurimum iuvat. With this passage we must compare XXVIII 51: unicum est intestinum ossifragi, mirae naturae, quod omnia devorata citissime conficit; huius pars extrema colligitur et reponitur, et cum opus fuerit, ventri laborantis alligatur, miro remedio omnes intestinorum dolores citissime sedat. It is clear that the source of the whole lies in the observation

of the habits of the bird, which has everywhere been the name-giving force (it is the Falco Ossifragus L). The animal which is able to break and devour bones, must enjoy an excellent digestion. Naturally, therefore, any part of its body, and especially the alimentary canal, must possess curative powers in cases of sickness of the digestive organs. The belief almost seems to be built upon a pun, such as have led to religious beliefs elsewhere. Wiedemann, in his excellent "Religion der Alten Aegypter", has called our attention to the fact that the Egyptians were exceedingly fond of puns which in a mythological way were to explain the origin of certain expressions (I c 43 f).

We turn next to a much simpler example of Sympathy: M.E.XVII 2. Against "dyspnoia" the physician prescribes the lung or liver of the fox or of the stag. These are undoubtedly two very fast and, therefore, well-winded animals. But there attaches to this passage also a more human interest. Who can doubt that the old nobleman (he was vir illustrissimus and magister officiorum;) whose way of living we can so well imagine from the reports of his contemporaries (see Boissier, La Fin du Paganisme, and S Dill. Roman Society in the Last Century of the Empire) took the greatest delight in embodying in his motley collection some homely medicine which he himself undoubtedly often prescribed to friends or household companions when he returned from the hunt?

A third example presents a somewhat greater difficulty. M.E. XVI 88 we read that against consumption, even in its desperate stages, it is an infallible remedy to give the spittle of a horse to the patient for three continuous days. The patient, he continues, sine cunctatione sanabis, sed equum mors subita sequitur. There may be in this remedy a multiplicity of ideas. Sympathy is but poorly discernible in the consideration that the horse as one of the fastest animals naturally would appeal to the superstitious in cases of respiratory troubles. But other considerations seem even more powerful. The first thought is to ex-

plain this remedy by the well-known theory of "transfer" (Pauly-Wissowa, I 35, 32 ff.). It is true, nothing is transferred into the animal; but nevertheless it dies just as if this had been done. By means of the spittle of the horse a tie is established between the beast and the man. But now we should expect either both to get well or both to die. It is not quite easy to see, either, why the strength of the horse should rest in his spittle or the foam of his mouth. Yet evidently the potion is strengthening. I confess that in this labyrinth of confusing ideas I am somewhat at a loss for an explanation. The one which follows I give only with great reserve. Are we allowed to see in the horse the daemon of the nether world which must carry with it the sickness? The idea of binding up one's troubles is familiar enough: thus sickness is bound up in a split tree or in the earth; examples abound in such books as Wuttke's *Volksaberglaube*. In Holstein the horse is still universally looked upon as a messenger of death; they speak of the "Totenpferd". Maybe that such ideas were also known to Marcellus, who must not infrequently have come into close contact with German settlers on the soil of his native province (cf Dill I c on this more or less friendly intercourse between the Gallic nobles and their new northern neighbors). Other threads that might lead to establish a connection between horses and lung trouble may be found in the legends of mares in foal by the winds, a story told especially of Spanish horses. For winds and the respiratory organs would seem to be naturally related. But there is little use in building a card house of hypotheses. Perhaps somebody else can bring the wanted information.

As I spoke of transfer, I should like to call the attention of scholars here to a remarkable little spell against toothache, M.E.XII 24a (I have labeled it so, as the editor has overlooked that this remedy forms a new section). These are the words: *dolorem rumpes, cum calciatus sub divo supra terram vivam stans caput ranae adprehendes et os aperies et spues intra os eius et rogabis eam, ut dentium dolores secum ferat, et tum vivam dimittes et hoc die bono et hora bona facies*. The spell bears all the earmarks of being "volkstuemlich". Every step can be paralleled in other spells and among other nations. There is certainly here a transfer proper. But why the very unusual order to wear shoes? We should be much less surprised to find the opposite, viz., the taking off of the

footwear. It seems that the shoe has here an insulating function if I may apply such modern expressions to antiquity. The shoe prevents the toothache, which through the frog is being sent below the earth, from returning to the patient through the conducting ground.

M.E.XV 11. A spell against swollen glands is accompanied by an incantation (Heim No 40). In this the sickness is called upon to leave the body of the sufferer. That the idea of the sickness as an inhabiting daemon, the idea of "possession", underlies this remedy, is quite clear and was stated, after others, by Heim also. There are, however, accompanying circumstances, which make this daemon character of the sickness absolutely certain. The spell is to be effected by holding the place of the trouble in the following manner: *digitis tribus, id est pollice, medio, et medicinali, residuis duobus elevatis*. That is, after bending three fingers, the remaining form what is technically known as the gesture of the "fica". One glance at Otto Jahn's classical treatise "*Vom Aberglauben des Boesen Blickes*" will convince the reader that this is the proper—or better improper—gesture to drive away all kinds of evil spirits. If, then, the demoniacal character of the disease has been clearly established, it becomes necessary to inquire once more into the meaning of the incantation. This cannot be done within the limits of this periodical, however. A few remarks may suffice. The use of the pronoun *hic* throughout the spell makes it clear that the wizard, to use the technical expression, only *praecivit, i e* he spoke the words first, and the patient himself repeated them after him. If any further proof for this were needed, it would be found in the use of the word *praecantabis*. At the end, it seems hardly doubtful that we must amend the words *evoco, educo, excanto* into *evoco, edico, excanto*.

Speaking of emending, it is rather remarkable that so acute an observer as Heim could put M.E.XV 105 among the Ephesia Grammata, which is only another polite name for nonsense. On the contrary the words are pure Greek. I print them here in Capitals, without any spacing, so that everybody may attempt their complete restoration where I have failed. HEILENPROSAGGERIVOMESIPOLLAN ABULIETONODIENIIDENELITON. As the spell is meant to help in case *si quae haeserint faucibus*, the key of the situation is easy to find: the words *lips, I address, much, are*

easily recognized. The sense of the invocation seems to be the usual threat against the sickness-dæmon.

I shall close these desultory remarks with a reference to a superstition which in many varying forms has survived to our day. M.E. VIII 55 people with eye trouble are advised to do the following: to go out at night and wait for a shooting star; when they see one falling, they shall count with great speed; for as many years as they can count, they will remain free from "lippitudo". There is nothing in this to call for any comment; but it may interest some of our readers to see as early as the fifth century a custom which I remember having witnessed in my own youth.

ERNST RIESS

THE NEW YORK LATIN LEAFLET

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All money received for THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND will be acknowledged in No 100 of THE LEAFLET, May 14.

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